

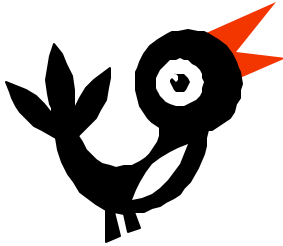
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UTAH STATE

REHABILITATION COUNCIL



2003

MISSION



The Mission of the State Rehabilitation Council, in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment.

We accomplish this mission by reviewing programs, analyzing service delivery processes, and advising on policies and procedures.

REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Susan Loving, *Chairperson*

Tericia Leavitt, *Vice Chairperson*

Eileen Glathar, *Secretary*

Linda Smith, *Past Chairperson*

MEMBERS:

Alan Ayoub, *Business, Labor, and Industry*

Hector E. Cando, *VR Counselor*

Marie Christiansen, *Consumer*

Nancy Friel, *Client Assistance Program*

Ron Gardner, *Representative of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired*

Richard Harward, *Representative of Individuals with Disabilities*

Charlene Johnson, *Consumer*

Helen Johnson, *Service Provider*

Marie Marshall, *Consumer*

Terri Pomeroy, *Consumer*

Helen Post, *Utah Parent Center*

Eileen Saunders, *Service Provider*

Brian Small, *Business, Labor, and Industry*

Milton Taylor, *Business, Labor, and Industry*

Nedra Taylor, *Service Provider*

Frank Turner, *Representative of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Council*

Nancy Zapata, *Consumer*

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

December, 2003

To the Citizens of the State Of Utah

Welcome to the 2003 State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report. This document reflects the work, contributions, and concerns of the members of the SRC who are committed to the belief that quality VR services must be available to all qualified individuals.

We have faced some challenges in the past year. The Ticket to Work program will be implemented in Utah soon. Congress is reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act, which has the potential to affect VR funds. The Utah legislature has seen it as necessary to cut funding to the USOR programs. Employment opportunities have decreased due to a downturn in the economy. The nation has gone to war. And yet the members of the SRC continue to participate in discussion and planning designed to implement our charge: review VR programs, analyze VR service delivery processes, and advise on VR policy and procedures.

We have had successes this year, too. The Bylaws Committee, under the leadership of Tericia Leavitt, has worked to clarify and update the language in the bylaws. Linda Smith and the Nominating Committee have proposed the names of several candidates for SRC membership, all of whom have

accepted the nomination and are new Council members. We have increased representation on the Council from business, labor, and industry. We are nearing completion of a Consumer Satisfaction Survey that will more accurately measure the satisfaction of VR clients. The Legislative Advocacy and Collaboration Subcommittees have developed goals and activities as part of the strategic planning process. We have advocated, along with CSAVR, for increased federal funding for VR services and programs.

These successes would not have been possible without the extraordinary assistance of Linda Smith, Tericia Leavitt, and Eileen Glathar (the Executive Committee), as well as Richard Nisogi (SRC/DRS Staff Liaison) and Cindy Hales (SRC/DRS Secretary). Their involvement in the activities of the SRC has been a major support to me during my year as Chair of the SRC.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Annual Report. The SRC members and leaders encourage and appreciate comments concerning the work of the Council and the operations and goals of the VR program.

Susan Loving
Chairperson, Utah State Rehabilitation Council

INTRODUCTION

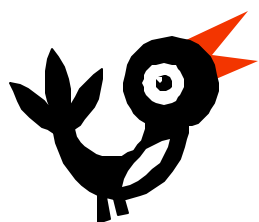
The Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens appointed by the Utah State Board of Education under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Council is composed of consumers, professionals, employers, labor representatives, family and parent advocates, and service providers, promoting public awareness and support of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and advocating for individuals with disabilities. The majority of Council membership consists of individuals with disabilities, many of whom have been involved as participants in the Vocational Rehabilitation process. Members of the SRC have been chosen for their interest, specialized knowledge, and expertise with serving the disabled community. SRC members serve a three-year term.

The Council provides direct communication from consumers, rehabilitation professionals, business, industry, labor, service providers, and other individuals inter-

ested in improving the services provided by the state agency. Collectively, this group reviews, analyzes, and advises the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Over the years the SRC has established strong community relationships among people with disabilities, local businesses, private and public agencies, service providers, community organizations, and advocacy groups to promote the objectives of the organization. The Council continues to be an active partner with the Vocational Rehabilitation program to ensure the provision of quality services to eligible consumers. Council members provide critical support to the USOR, and to individuals with disabilities served by the agency, by communicating with legislators on state and national levels. They promote legislation and funding requests that continue the specialized services provided by the agency.

Council members participate in various functions of the VR agency. These include attending USOR Statewide Administrators Meetings (SAM), the annual USOR agency meeting, Golden Key employment recognition awards ceremonies, town meetings, focus groups, and district VR staff meetings. The SRC has contributed to and continues to be involved in the development and implementation of the USOR's Strategic Plan and the State Plan. The Council has identified areas of strength within the USOR, acknowledged the best practices of the agency, and recommended improvements to the VR program. Members of the State Rehabilitation Council and the staff of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation agree that, through appropriate communication and partnerships, Vocational Rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in Utah will continue to improve.



PURPOSE

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the SRC are outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998, and include the following:

- **Review, analyze, and advise the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR)** regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions of the state rehabilitation agency that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes.
- **In partnership with the USOR** develop, agree to, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- **Advise the USOR** regarding activities authorized to be carried out, and assist in the preparation of the State Plan, amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations.
- **Conduct a review and analysis** of the effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction.
- **Prepare and submit an annual report** to the Utah State Board of Education and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation in the State, and make the report available to the public.
- **Coordinate the work of the Council** with the activities of other disability-related councils within the State.
- **Establish working relationships** between Vocational Rehabilitation, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the special education advisory panel established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the State Developmental Disabilities Council, and the State Workforce Services Council.
- **Perform other functions** that the SRC determines are appropriate and comparable to other functions performed by the Council.

The SRC, in partnership with the USOR Vocational Rehabilitation program, is committed to helping the people of Utah who qualify for services to obtain better jobs, with a living wage, health care benefits, and better career opportunities, and to become as independent as possible. The Council believes that individuals with disabilities should be full and active partners in the VR process. Members of the SRC seek to work cooperatively with the state VR agency to ensure that the activities of the VR program are carried out in a manner that is respectful of an individual's dignity and recognizes an individual's right to make informed choices.

2002–03 YEAR IN REVIEW

LEADERSHIP

The past year saw a variety of changes occur within the Council. The chairperson elected for the year 2002–03 resigned her position because of educational and work requirements. The chairperson-elect, Susan Loving, assumed the leadership position after the resignation, and has provided strong leadership to ensure that the Council functions in a manner that will fulfill its responsibilities and accomplish its goals.

SRC STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan was developed for the SRC to identify specific needs to focus the work of the Council. Four areas were agreed upon: Collaboration (with other agencies and disabilities groups), Legislative Advocacy, the SRC Annual Report/PR, and Consumer Satisfaction/Needs Assessment. Objectives and action plans were then developed. More information about the Plan is provided later in this report.

COUNCIL MEMBER VISITS

SRC members visited local VR offices and attended statewide administrative meetings. The purposes of these visits were to become more familiar with the operation of various district offices where meetings were hosted and

to raise awareness of agency management issues. These meetings also offered the opportunity for SRC members, VR staff, and supervisory members to interact and become more familiar with each other, enhancing relationships.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

During the 2003 state legislative session, funding was reduced due to revenue shortfalls at a state level. However, funding was restored to the program because of the collaborative efforts of SRC members, members of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, and other organizations working in support of the agency's administration. The Council has closely followed the reauthorization of the federal Workforce Incentives Act (WIA). USOR administrators provided valuable information that helped Council members determine actions to be taken to respond to areas of concern in the proposed legislation. Information was shared about the potential impact on the VR program and individuals with disabilities in Utah. Strategies to inform State Board of Education members about Vocational Rehabilitation and the continuing need for support of the USOR have been discussed and

will need to be implemented.

TICKET TO WORK

Council members have received training and information about the implementation of the Ticket to Work program of the Social Security Administration (SSA), an initiative designed to encourage recipients of Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Social Security Income (SSI) to go to work and reduce or eliminate their need for SSA benefits. The Ticket to Work initiative was scheduled for implementation in the State of Utah this year. Since Utah is among the last group of states to initiate the Ticket to Work program, the USOR had the advantage of learning from the states that have previously implemented the program. The SRC was notified of the procedures that the VR staff will use in working with interested consumers.

SRC ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the SRC focused on the orientation of new members and the development of action steps for the Council's annual goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The theme for the meeting was "Engage the Vision and Make It So." A member of the Executive Committee provided the training. The premise

of the training was to help the new members understand the Council's mission, their roles and responsibilities, and the importance of getting involved, and commit to an active role in helping to achieve the SRC's goals.

WEBSITE

Information about the SRC is linked to the USOR agency website that was redesigned this past year to improve accessibility and increase the amount of information offered. Information on the site includes the Council's legal basis, mission, roles and responsibilities; an overview of the Council; information on contact persons; and scheduled meeting dates and locations. (www.usor.utah.gov)

COMMITTEES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Several ad hoc committees were formed this year to accomplish the work of the Council, as well as work on the State Plan. Committees included the Nominating Committee, Mission Statement Committee, Bylaws Committee, and Advocacy Committee. Committee members selected chairpersons.

■ **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Resignations and the expiration of terms for several members created openings on the Council. Some members chose to be nominated to serve a second term. There were several vacancies that needed to be filled with required members, as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act. The full Council formed a Nominating Committee to solicit nominations, review the qualifications of nominees, conduct interviews, and present the names of the individuals for consideration. The committee submitted the names to the State Board of Education in accordance with specified timelines. Highly qualified and committed individuals were appointed to the Council. They bring commitment and unique expertise to the SRC.

■ **MISSION STATEMENT COMMITTEE**

Council members determined that a mission statement needed to be developed to guide the work of the SRC. A great deal of time and effort went into the development of the statement. After several meetings a statement was presented to the Council. It was discussed at length, suggestions were made, and the statement was adopted.

■ **BYLAWS COMMITTEE**

Upon review, it was determined that the bylaws of the Council needed to be updated. A committee was formed to suggest revisions. It required a detailed review, many discussions, and much effort on the part of committee members to make the necessary changes. Updated bylaws were presented to the Council for feedback at various stages in the review. The Council adopted the completed bylaws. This was a major activity of the Council that was completed during the year.

■ **ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

Advocacy on behalf of consumers of VR services continued to be a high priority for the Council. SRC members participated in various ways to promote the State VR program. Funding issues were addressed and contacts were made related to proposed legislation language that has an impact on the provision of VR services. The Council sent a letter of support to the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities on behalf of continued funding to support

the activities of the Legislative Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (LCPD). Members of the LCPD are key advocates for the USOR and VR, partnering with the SRC and the USOR to ensure funding and legislative support for the programs.

■ **USOR STATE PLAN**

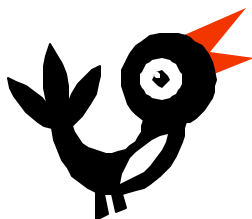
The Rehabilitation Act and its regulations require the development of the State Plan to outline how the State will comply with and implement the provisions of the law. The SRC has been involved in this process for a number of years. SRC members attended Town Meetings to participate in the collection of public comments on the development of the State Plan. Public attendance at the town meetings increased around the state. This was accomplished by coordinating the schedule for the meetings with a number of regional Transition Meetings sponsored by the Utah State Office of Education Special Education Program. Council members' comments and questions will be considered by the USOR in the development of the State Plan. The SRC also gives input on the objectives and strategies that are part of the agency's Strategic Plan. As the State Plan is implemented, the Council receives reports and follows progress made toward the accomplishment of goals and objectives. Recommendations made are considered valuable feedback by the agency.



ORIENTATION PROCESS FOR NEW APPLICANTS

Council members have participated with VR staff in the review and update of the orientation process used by the agency. The brochure has been updated and approved for use by agency staff to provide necessary information to VR applicants and consumers. A final version of a video that will be used as a method for providing orientation information has been completed and is being used by all VR district offices. A DVD presentation, which was a previous SRC recommendation, has also undergone several modifications based on suggestions from USOR staff, consumers, SRC members, and other interested parties. It is anticipated that this new tool will greatly improve the orientation process to better inform applicants about the VR program and services. A final step in the orientation process was to develop and implement the process for USOR staff to prepare applicants to utilize these resources. This has been completed, and the new orientation procedure is in place. The Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the process.

SRC STRATEGIC PLANNING



Throughout the year, the Council developed a strategic plan to be implemented during the coming year. This planning process was determined to be necessary to help the SRC identify priorities and focus efforts to accomplish its mission and fulfill responsibilities outlined in the federal regulations and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. Goal areas were determined. Committees were formed to develop and prioritize objectives and activities. Timelines are also being developed. Goal areas to be addressed during the coming year are:

- Collaboration with Other Agencies
- Legislative Advocacy
- SRC Annual Report/PR
- Consumer Satisfaction/Needs Assessment

Last year's accomplishments in these four goal areas are reported in the following reports from the chairpersons of the committees.

Collaboration/Coordination Committee

Chairperson: Marie Christiansen

The Collaboration/Coordination Committee worked this year to improve communication and enhance relationships with other interagency councils. It was determined that an important way to accomplish this goal would be to seek representation from other disability councils/committees on the SRC. Representation among the current membership of the SRC from other councils was assessed, and it was concluded that there was appropriate representation to address this concern. SRC members were surveyed about their roles on other councils/committees. They were asked to identify what the activities and priorities of these groups are at this time. It was then determined which category of member each represented on the SRC. A listing of individuals and whom they represent was formulated and made available to the full Council. Another way in which the SRC accomplished this goal was to exchange minutes of meetings with other councils and committees to raise awareness, facilitate communication, and create opportunities for further collaboration and/or coordination of efforts. The next step taken by the committee will be to ask the SRC to determine the kind of information that needs to be exchanged with the other councils/committees to adequately facilitate this interaction. Another

item that will be addressed by the full Council is the number of representatives to recruit as members of the SRC, as outlined in the bylaws.

Legislative Advocacy Committee

Chairperson: Eileen Saunders

An important goal for this committee was to establish open communication between SRC members and the State Legislature. To accomplish this objective, it was determined that members of the Legislative Advocacy Committee and the Council need to understand how to better communicate with each member of the Legislature. Development of appropriate advocacy skills allows members to feel more confident in contacting state legislators on behalf of the Vocational Rehabilitation agency. Legislators will then have a greater understanding of the VR program and will support the agency's funding requests for services to eligible individuals with disabilities throughout Utah.

Members of the committee have discussed several issues that need to be raised with our congressional delegation and state legislators. One issue of concern is the funding of One-Stop Centers and the proposed requirement that VR funds and funding from other mandated partners be used to operate them. This is a concern on the national and state levels. Another concern relates to needed funding for Medicaid buy-in for people with disabilities. The impact of this is significant for VR consumers who receive federal disability support and wish to return to work. Other issues that need to be reviewed include Medicaid spend-down and coverage for dental and eye care. Inadequate state funding for these benefits directly affects the ability of the VR program to assist some eligible consumers to achieve and maintain employment.

SRC Annual Report Committee

Chairperson: Susan Loving

The Executive Committee is responsible for providing direction to the committee chairpersons about the information that is required for the SRC's annual report. They then collect the information and prepare the content of the report. The committee was assisted in this effort by the VR staff assigned to support the Council, and by the administration of the USOR.

Consumer Satisfaction/Needs Assessment Committee

Chairperson: Richard Harward

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, has for years been conducting surveys of client satisfaction as per previous SRC recommendations. The SRC, through an ad hoc committee, is currently involved in developing an improved process to survey consumer satisfaction. The Consumer Satisfaction Ad Hoc Committee consists of SRC members, USOR staff members, and a research consultant.

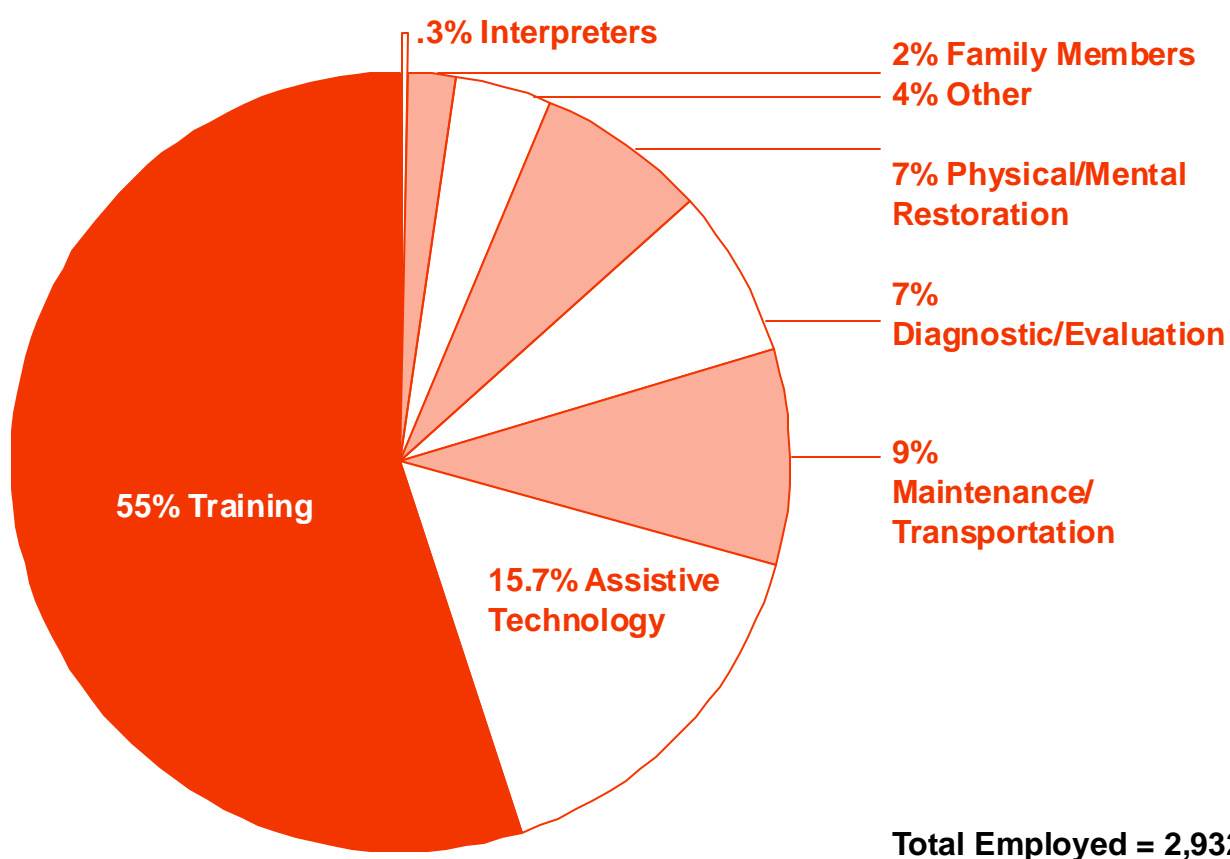
The ad hoc committee is focusing on the postcard consumer satisfaction survey at this time. The consumer satisfaction contract calls for:

- A literature review related to current national consumer satisfaction evaluation of State VR programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration's Field Test of Evaluation Standards on Consumer Satisfaction with VR Services published in March 2002.
- An analysis of the USOR's current consumer satisfaction survey process.
- An analysis of the current response rate, with the intent of identifying methodologies for increasing the rate of response.
- Development of recommendations for an overall consumer satisfaction process.

A focus group has reviewed and revised the survey questions and the cover letter that will be sent with the survey instrument. Upon completion of the necessary changes to the questions and the process for implementing the survey, the consultant and the USOR program evaluation specialist, who have worked on developing the new survey, will submit it to the ad hoc committee and the USOR staff. When they have been approved by those groups, the new process and questionnaire will be proposed to the SRC for approval and implementation.

EXPENDITURES

This chart shows the percentage of case service funds utilized for services that assisted people with disabilities in preparing for and obtaining employment.

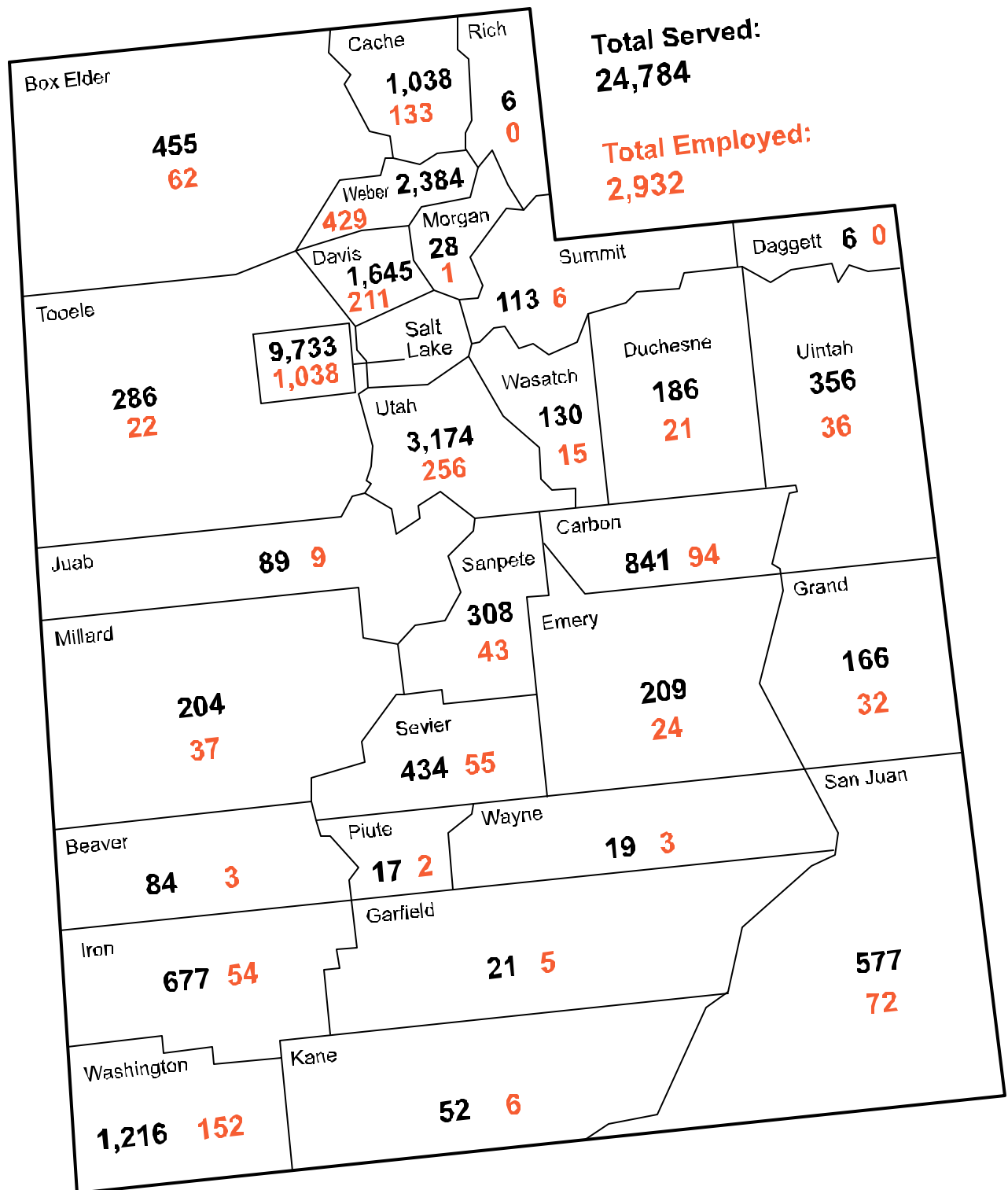


HIGHLIGHTS

The following information demonstrates the individual and program success Vocational Rehabilitation achieved during 2003:

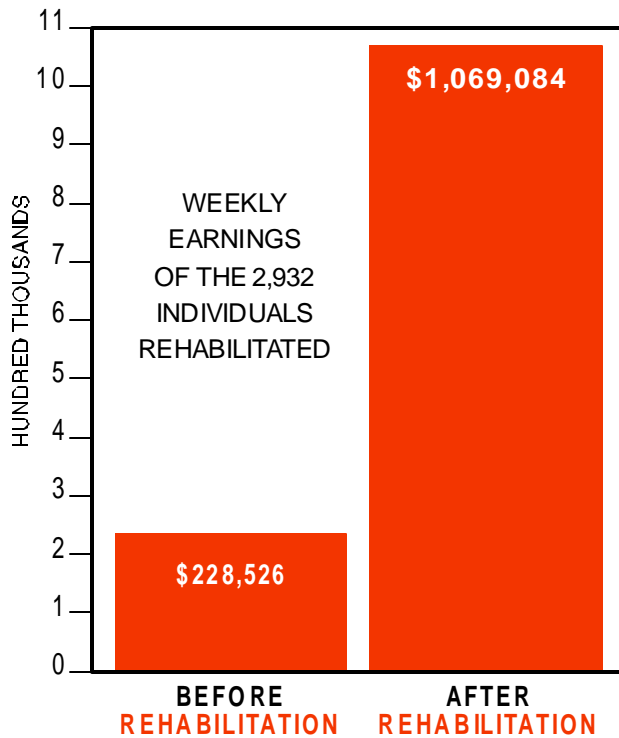
- ▶ 2,932 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed.
- ▶ 24,784 individuals were provided with Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- ▶ 88 percent of those employed were severely disabled.
- ▶ 210 public assistance recipients were successfully employed.
- ▶ 607 Social Security Disability Insurance recipients were successfully employed.
- ▶ 94 individuals were successfully employed through supported employment services.
- ▶ \$11,118,474 in estimated annual taxes were paid by 2,932 employed individuals after Vocational Rehabilitation services were provided.

IMPACT OF THE VR PROGRAM



ECONOMIC IMPACT

AFTER REHABILITATION SERVICES



CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE 2,932 INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED THROUGH THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

| GENDER | Number | Percent |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Male | 1,630 | 56% |
| Female | 1,302 | 44% |
| Total | 2,932 | 100% |

ETHNIC BACKGROUND

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| White | 2,478 | 85.0% |
| African American | 57 | 2.0% |
| Asian | 5 | 0.1% |
| Hispanic | 106 | 4.0% |
| Native American | 83 | 3.0% |
| Pacific Islander | 20 | 0.8% |
| Multiple Ethnicity | 183 | 5.1% |
| Total | 2,932 | 100% |

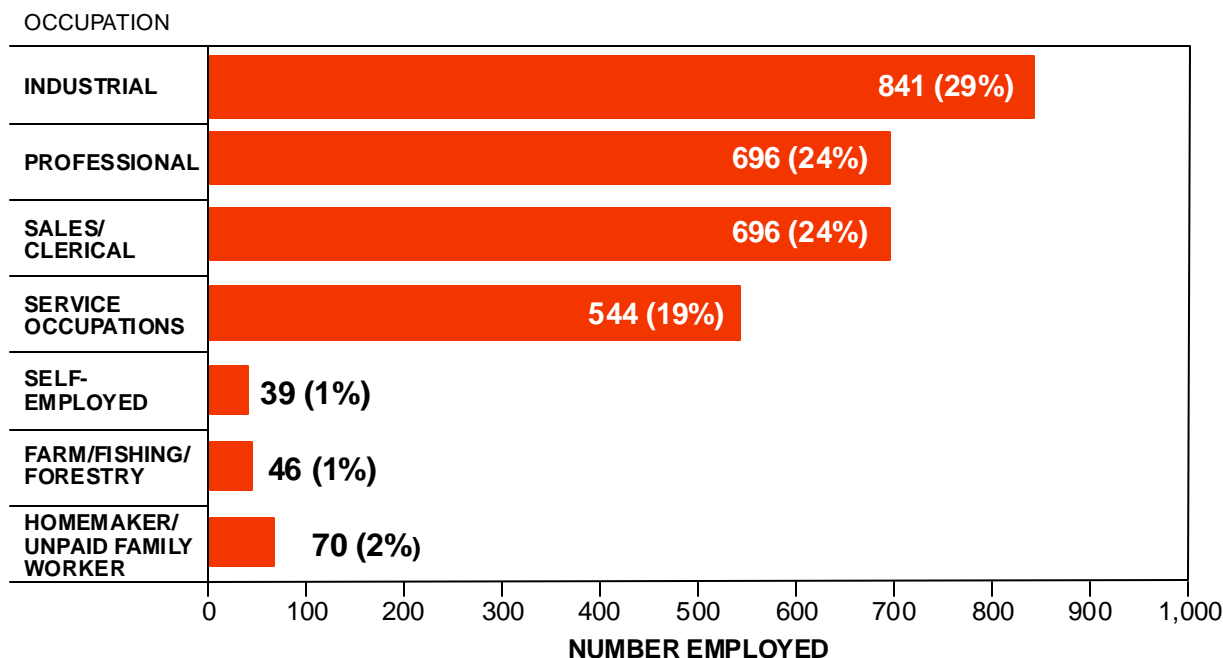
| MARITAL STATUS | Number | Percent |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Married | 911 | 31% |
| Widowed | 36 | 1% |
| Divorced | 624 | 21% |
| Separated | 196 | 7% |
| Never Married | 1,165 | 46% |
| Total | 2,932 | 100% |

AGE AT REFERRAL

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Less than 20 years | 30 | 2% |
| 20 through 34 | 1,391 | 48% |
| 35 through 44 | 760 | 26% |
| 45 through 64 | 722 | 23% |
| 65 and over | 29 | 1% |
| Total | 2,932 | 100% |

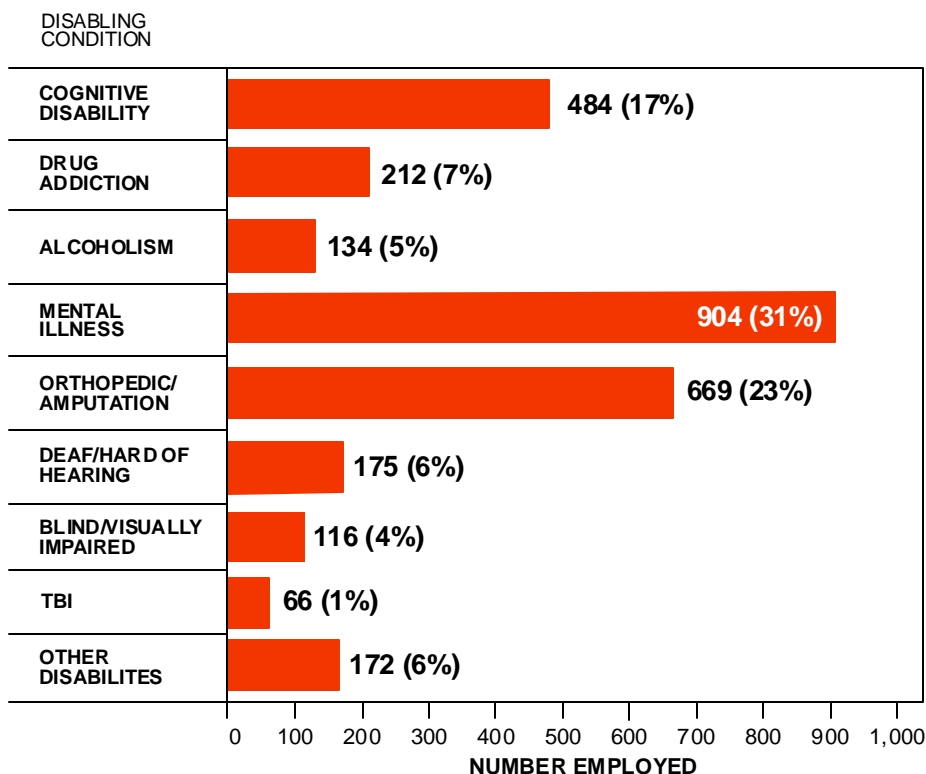
OCCUPATIONS

OF THE 2,932 INDIVIDUALS REHABILITATED



MAJOR DISABLING CONDITIONS

of 2,932 Employed Individuals



SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

Chris Israel



Chris is a young man diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder who had lost several jobs due to his disability. After losing his last job he was referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation program, where he was diagnosed, provided help with medication, and given tools while attending the Davis Applied Technology College to learn a trade in machining. Chris was an exemplary student, and his instructor was so impressed with his abilities that he referred him to a job where Chris has been working for over a year. Chris is an inspiring young man who is very appreciative of the services received from the Vocational Rehabilitation program. He says, "My life is one hundred times better, both financially and emotionally, than before receiving services from VR." Way to go, Chris!

Sharelle Goff

You might think that being a deaf young woman in a hearing world would place some limitations on a person's life, but that is not the case with Sharelle Goff. Sharelle started her schooling experience at age 18 months, and did not take a single year off from school until she graduated from college. Her parents found out that Sharelle was deaf when she was 16 months old. It was a challenge for her to be the only deaf person in her family, as well as one of the few deaf students at school, but she learned to work around it. Sharelle states, "As I look back at my college experience, I struggled heavily with finances. Vocational Rehabilitation was a major help to me as I obtained my education at Utah Valley State College. If it were not for Vocational Rehabilitation, where I had a wonderful and supportive counselor who believed in me, I would not have succeeded with my higher education. My graduation with a degree in Behavioral Science with an emphasis in Psychology marks my success." Sharelle obtained the job she always wanted at the college, as an advisor for the deaf and hard of hearing. Congratulations, Sharelle!



SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE



Ruth Ann Perdue

Ruth Ann was halfway through her RN nursing degree and working at Primary Children's Hospital as an LPN when a shuttle bus rammed into her car on the way home from work one day. After recovering from her injuries and completing physical and occupational therapy for a year, she was referred to a doctor who finally diagnosed her with a closed head injury resulting from the accident. Some of Ruth Ann's residual challenges from the accident included the necessity of learning how to read again, learning how to manage her finances, learning how to take the bus, and having trouble tracking details well. But with a family of teenagers at home and a supportive husband, Ruth Ann decided she had to complete her goal of finishing her RN degree. She had to retake classes because it had been many years since her accident, but with determination and the motto of "never give up" always in her mind, she worked through many difficult days to complete her degree. Ruth Ann has had many job offers and is currently working as a pediatric home nurse. She states that her whole life was turned upside down by the accident, but she had a dream and a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor who believed in her dream. Ruth Ann says that the sun always comes up tomorrow, and her VR counselor was part of her sunshine. You are fabulous, Ruth Ann!

MEETING SCHEDULE

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL YEAR 2003–04

Full Council Meeting: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Individual committees may meet following the full council meeting.

Last Wednesday of Each Month:

January 28, 2004

February 25, 2004

March 31, 2004

April 28, 2004

May 26, 2004

June 30, 2004

July 28, 2004

August 25, 2004

September 29, 2004

October 27, 2004

November 24, 2004

Location of SRC Meetings:

Utah State Office of Education Board Room
250 East 500 South
Salt Lake City, Utah

For further information, phone:

(801) 538-7530 or 1-800-473-7530

